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LB 1003

you to read the committee amendments to get all the details. As we look into the future, we know that higher education of our youth will remain extremely important. Nebraska currently ranks very high in the percentage of the state budget which goes to higher education. In terms of percentage of income of state residents, we rank right at the top. I don't know what the future holds as far as funding is concerned so we had better make it easier for families to save for higher education costs in the future. We know these costs are not likely to go down. LB 1003 will provide incentives for parents and grandparents to invest for future higher education cost. We believe Nebraskans have the same opportunities to invest...should have the same opportunities to invest in a qualified tuition savings plan as those citizens in 46 other states. There are committee amendments and I think Senator Bohlke will explain that, but I think a lot of us would like to invest in a tax...in a plan where we could save some income taxes for our children and for our grandchildren. Too late for me to do it for my children, but I can do it for my grandchildren. And this was one of those sit on the tractor and have a wild idea program. I want to keep Nebraska kids in Nebraska, going to college in Nebraska. I've had quite a few experience with friends and relatives whose children have gone to college in other states. They don't come back to Nebraska. Hopefully, this bill would help students stay in Nebraska.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Senator Bohlke, you're recognized to open on the committee amendments. (AM2695, Legislative Journal page 987.)

SENATOR BOHLKE: Thank you, Mr. President and members. The committee amendments replace the original provisions with a modified program educational savings plan. There are a number of technical things, but the major changes include: the State Investment Office shall invest the money in the funds created by the act; the expansions to allow participation by people other than citizens of Nebraska; and the use of benefits at institutions of higher education not located in Nebraska; an intent to appropriate \$300,000 for start-up and operating expenses; termination provisions if the trust is not operated by January 1, 2002; and authorization for the Legislature to contribute to the endowment fund at its own discretion. Those